AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A ~~flexible and scalable~~ method for handling telecommunication equipment through the control of ATM access networks, the method comprising:

a Central Processor communicating to a plurality of Device Processor Boards of a shelf belonging to a system node, said communication being directly addressable to at least one Device Processor Board via a path employing Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol,

providing a Board Relay functionality to one of plural Device Processor Boards whereby the one of the plural Device Processor Boards can relay control messages from a Central Processor to other specified Device Processor Boards,

providing the Board Relay functionality through configuration messages from the Central Processor,

establishing said path employing the Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol only between the Central Processor and said Device Processor Boards to which Board Relay functionality has been given

~~wherein a Board Relay functionality is attributed to any Device Processor and wherein a Central Processor is connected to all the other Device Processors by simply addressing the messages to the Board Relay and relaying them through it~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The method~~Method~~ according to claim 1, ~~wherein~~ further comprising the Board Relay functionality ~~supervises~~ supervising all the other Device Processors on behalf of the Central Processor.

3. (Currently Amended) The method~~Method~~ according to claim 1, further comprising giving ~~wherein~~ the Board Relay functionality ~~is given by~~ from the Central

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Processor to the Device Processors ~~chosen according to the network configuration,~~ through configuration messages.

4. (Currently Amended) The method~~Method~~ according to~~as in~~ claim 1 ~~wherein~~ further comprising sharing ~~the~~ bandwidth allocated through an ATM backbone for a single management connection ~~is shared~~ between the device processors supervised by the board relay.

5. (Currently Amended) The method~~Method~~ according to claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ further comprising using Ethernet and ATM network/switch connections between the Central Processor and Device Processors ~~take place using Ethernet and ATM network/switch~~.

6. (Cancelled)

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7. (New) A system for handling telecommunication equipment through an ATM access network, comprising

at least a Central Processor communicating to a plurality of Device Processor Boards of a shelf belonging to a system node, said communication being directly addressable to at least one Device Processor Board via a path employing Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol , wherein

to any of said Device Processor Boards is given a Board Relay functionality so that it can relay control messages from the Central Processor to other specified Device Processor Boards,

said Board Relay functionality being given to said Device Processor Board through configuration messages from the Central Processor,

said path employing the Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol being established only between the Central Processor and said Device Processor Boards to which Board Relay functionality has been given.

8. (New) The system of claim 7, wherein said Board Relay functionality is hidden inside an Internal Control Support (ICS) layer of the Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol.

9. (New) The system of claim 7, wherein said path employing Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol takes place via ATM connections through an ATM switch.

10. (New) The system of claim 7, wherein said path employing Internal Control Support (ICS) protocol takes place via a single Ethernet cable.

11. (New) The system of claim 7, wherein bandwidth allocated through an ATM backbone for a single management connection is shared between device processors supervised by a device processor board to which Board Relay functionality has been given.

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